

## **“Charting the Landscape/Mapping New Paths”: Project Descriptions**

- 1. Project Name: Center for Informal Learning and Schools**
- 2. Goal: To support the development of the informal science education infrastructure by developing new leaders, knowledge, and tools that can leverage alliances between science learning institutions and schools to build K12 student science understanding.**
- 3. Participating institutions/agencies: Exploratorium, King’s College London, University of California Santa Cruz**
- 4. Your role/expertise in this type project: The Exploratorium, as lead agency in CILS, provides a research testbed; a nexus for educators from many different disciplines and institutions to gather to discuss questions and issues from the field of practice and research; a professional development program for museum educators, and a critical role in disseminating results of the work to the science learning institutions field.**
- 5. Outcomes / successes to-date: Some 24 graduate students enrolled in CILS programs, 8 CILS postdoctoral fellows appointed, 100 museum educators participating in CILS professional development programs. Two international conferences held. Formed alliances with several US and EU initiatives examining informal learning and the role of informal science institutions. Several publications and numerous conference presentations.**
- 6. Lessons learned : The dichotomy between informal/formal does the science learning institutions field a disservice. Investigations of learning in science learning institutions need to be a part of a broader investigation of learning, and not isolated by institutional affiliations. Future leaders in education need frequent opportunities to encounter the field of practice and the problems that they face.**
- 7. If we began anew we would ask these questions at the beginning: What do school leaders need to know to commit funds to alliances with science learning institutions? What do leaders of science learning institutions need to know for the same?**
- 8. Critical success factors: Extensive collaborations among academic, school, and science learning institution partners, both internal and external to CILS.**

9. Our next steps will be: Develop a strong research base that maps the landscape of science learning institutions and schools. Increase dissemination to the field.
10. What else?